

Washington, DC-Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) today to give final approval to the *Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act*

which would begin to close the gender pay gap in this country by reversing a Supreme Court decision that has kept women from pursuing pay discrimination claims. The bill now goes to President Obama and will likely be the first major piece of legislation he signs into law. Rodriguez voted for a similar bill earlier this month. This version of the bill was passed in the Senate. The bill passed the House by a vote 250-177.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would clarify that each discriminatory paycheck or compensation constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act. As long as workers file their charges within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, their charges would be considered timely. This was the law prior to the Supreme Court's May 2007 decision.

"No one should be paid less because of their gender," said Rodriguez. "No one should be treated differently because of the color of their skin or their religious beliefs. The Supreme Court has tried to roll back the clock on civil rights, but I will not stand for it."

The Ledbetter decision has already been cited in hundreds of discrimination cases. Not only have pay discrimination cases been adversely impacted, but protections guaranteed by the Fair Housing Act, Title IX, and the Eight Amendment have also been affected. *The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act* would apply to workers who file claims of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Lilly Ledbetter worked for nearly 20 years at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. She sued the company after learning that she was paid less than her male counterparts at the facility, despite having more experience than several of them. A jury found that her employer had unlawfully discriminated against her on the basis of sex.

However, the Supreme Court said that Ledbetter had waited too long to sue for pay discrimination, despite the fact that she filed a charge with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as soon as she received information alerting her to pay discrimination.

While Ledbetter filed her charge within 180 days of receiving discriminatory pay, the court

ruled that, since Ledbetter did not raise a claim within 180 days of the employer's decision to pay her less, she could not receive any relief. Under this Supreme Court decision, employees in Ledbetter's position would be forced to live with discriminatory paychecks for the rest of their careers.

Despite claims from critics, the Congressional Budget Office estimated in 2007 that since the bill would essentially return the law to where it stood before the Supreme Court ruling, the legislation will not lead to an onslaught of costly new litigation. Click [here](#) for the CBO estimate.